Extending Perioperative Care Beyond Hospital Walls: A Nurse-Led Hospital@Home Model for Day Surgery Recovery

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Background and Aim

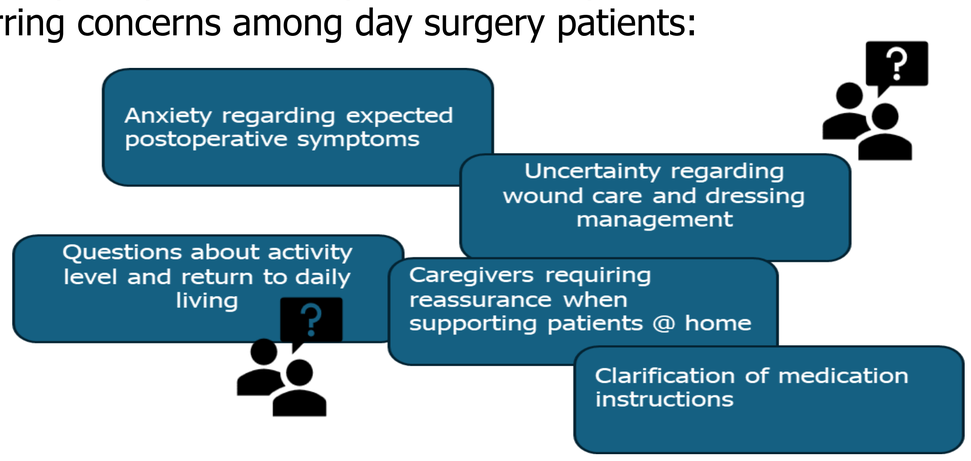
Advances in minimally invasive surgery and enhanced recovery programmes have resulted in shorter hospital stays and increased same-day surgical procedures. While early discharge improves healthcare efficiency, patients and caregivers assume greater responsibility for postoperative recovery at home. Despite receiving discharge education, many patients experienced uncertainty regarding wound care, medication use and recognition of postoperative complications after returning home. Hence, Perioperative nurses play an important role in extending care beyond hospital discharge by providing structured education, caregiver empowerment and timely postoperative support.

Team Members

	Name	Designation	Department
Team Leader	Anne Lai Foon Wan	Senior Nurse Manager	Day Surgery Centre (DSC)
Team Members	Tan Sok Lan	Nurse Clinician	DSC
	Roshni	Nurse Clinician	DSC
	Ng Gek Ling	Nurse Clinician	DSC
Sponsor	Alice Leong	Deputy Director Nursing	Perioperative Services

Evidence for a Problem Worth Solving

Routine postoperative telephone follow-up identified several recurring concerns among day surgery patients:



These observations highlighted opportunities to strengthen-discharge education and improve continuity of perioperative care beyond hospital discharge.

Established Practice

Our established nurse-led post-operative follow-up programme includes the following:

Nurse-led discharge education	Caregiver Empowerment	Postoperative Follow-up
Standardised teaching materials Medication counselling Wound care demonstrations Recognition of danger signs Individualised discharge planning	Inclusion of caregivers during education Visual educational materials Practical wound care guidance Home recovery advice	Routine nurse-led telephone calls within 48 hours Reinforcement of discharge advice Assessment of recovery progress Escalation where clinically indicated

Results

Routine post-operative follow-up calls over the years have shown that patient generally understood discharge instructions and appreciated the opportunity to clarify concerns during recovery. Common themes during follow-up included:



Verbal feedback from patients indicated that the follow-up calls provided reassurance, reinforced discharge education and increased confidence during recovery. Caregivers also appreciated the opportunity to clarify concerns, while nurses identified patients requiring additional review and reinforced safe recovery practices.

Discussion

Our established nurse-led post-operative follow-up programme has demonstrated the value of extending perioperative nursing support beyond hospital discharge. Routine postoperative follow-up provides opportunities to reinforce patient education, address emerging concerns and support caregivers in managing postoperative recovery.

The approach demonstrates how perioperative nurses can continue to deliver person-centred care beyond the operating theatre through education, communication and early intervention.

Outcomes

The following outcomes were observed:

Clinical	Patient Experience	Organizational
Improved patient preparedness	Greater reassurance during recovery	Strengthened nurse-led perioperative services
Early recognition of postoperative concerns	Increased confidence following discharge	Supports Hospital@Home initiatives
Reinforced safe recovery practices	Enhanced caregiver engagement	Promotes patient-centred discharge practices
Appropriate escalation when required	Improved continuity of care	Provides opportunities for continuous quality improvement

Routine post-operative follow-up calls should be continued as part of standard day surgery care to reinforce discharge education, enable early recognition of concerns requiring further medical attention and strengthen continuity of care.

Conclusion

Our established Nurse-Led post-operative follow-up programme continues to support patients beyond hospital discharge through education, caregiver empowerment and early post-operative follow-up. Take-home Message: Hospital discharge is not the end of perioperative care — it is the beginning of supported recovery at home.